



## Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office  
Michigan Hall of Justice  
P.O. Box 30052  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone (517) 373-0128

Carl L. Gromek, Chief of Staff  
State Court Administrator

DATE: December 7, 2006

TO: All Interested Persons

FROM: Carl L. Gromek

RE: SCAO-Approved Forms

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The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) is responsible for developing, revising, approving, and distributing court forms. To elicit more input from users of the court forms, we will begin publishing for comment proposed revisions, new forms, and issue statements at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/> and will notify courts of newly-published material through SCAO email. The comments received during the publication period will be provided to the Michigan Court Forms Committee for discussion at its meetings.

The Michigan Court Forms Committee consists of representatives from various trial court associations, some sections of the State Bar of Michigan, and relevant state departments or agencies. Individual sections of the Michigan Court Forms Committee meet annually and discuss requests for new forms and suggestions for revising existing forms that are received throughout the year by the State Court Administrative Office. Any forms that are approved by the committee are recommended to the State Court Administrator for approval. Forms approved by the State Court Administrator are then distributed to trial courts, printers, publishers, and relevant state departments semiannually and posted to the SCAO website. For further details about this process, see Section 8-06, State Court Administrative Office Forms, in the *Michigan Court Administration Reference Guide* at [http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/carg/rg\\_sec8.pdf](http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/carg/rg_sec8.pdf).

Any interested person may request that the State Court Administrative Office develop a new form or revise an existing form. Requests may be made by mail, telephone, or email as follows:

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- mail to SCAO-Approved Court Forms, PO Box 30048, Lansing, Michigan 48909.
- telephone at 517-373-4864.
- email to [CourtFormsInfo@courts.mi.gov](mailto:CourtFormsInfo@courts.mi.gov).

We welcome comments from all interested persons. Our goal in instituting this change is to be responsive to individual input while maintaining the functionality and efficiency of the committee process.

CLG/alb

## **A. Process for Developing and Revising SCAO-Approved Forms**

### **1. Formal Request**

Any interested person may initiate development of a new form or revision of an existing form by directing the request to SCAO-Approved Court Forms at PO Box 30048, Lansing, Michigan 48909; telephoning at 517-373-4864; or emailing to [CourtFormsInfo@courts.mi.gov](mailto:CourtFormsInfo@courts.mi.gov).

Initial contact regarding forms is made to the forms unit, and may include:

- a. a request for a revision or a new form.
- b. a question about the use of a form.
- c. an inquiry into the background or history of a form.
- d. other concerns regarding a form.

### **2. Documentation and Follow-Up**

The forms unit reviews and responds to all inquiries. If further action is taken, the individual who made the inquiry is kept informed of the status of the inquiry until it is resolved.

### **3. Publication for Comment**

New and revised forms for review by the Michigan Court Forms Committee will be published for comment at <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/courtforms/publish.htm/>. Publication will consist of posting the proposal (narrative, draft form, or concept) to the *State Court Administrative Office Approved Court Forms* webpage and sending notice of the publication to all trial court association presidents, the State Bar of Michigan, Michigan Lawyers Weekly, and the trial courts. Comments received on a proposal will be posted daily for the duration of the comment period. The new and revised forms and the any comments received regarding those new or revised forms will then be considered by the Michigan Court Forms Committee for final resolution.

### **4. Formal Meeting**

The Michigan Court Forms Committee consists of representatives from the judiciary, state government, and the legal profession. The committee meets to discuss issues referred to them following publication and comment. The primary focus of the committee is substantive and procedural content analysis. However, the State Court Administrative Office may ask for input regarding design as it relates to effective use of forms. Minutes of Michigan Court Forms Committee meetings are distributed to members and, upon request, to any other interested person.

**a. Schedule**

The committee meets at certain specific times throughout the year. Circuit and district court forms (except for those related to the family division of circuit court) are discussed in March. Friend of the court forms are discussed in March or September. Probate court forms are discussed in September. Family division forms are discussed in September.

**b. Appointment to the Committee**

Members are appointed by the State Court Administrator for three-year terms. As positions become vacant, trial court association presidents and others are asked to nominate individuals for appointment. The State Court Administrator will consider the nominee with input from the Trial Court Services analysts.

**B. Approval and Distribution**

**1. Approval by State Court Administrator**

After new and revised forms have been prepared, the proposed forms are presented to Supreme Court counsel for review. Once approved by Supreme Court counsel, the proposed forms are forwarded to the State Court Administrator for final approval.

**2. Distribution of SCAO-Approved Forms, Instructions, and Other Information**

Paper copies of SCAO-approved forms are distributed to trial courts, legal printers, publishers, software companies, case management system providers, and relevant state government departments. SCAO-approved forms are also made available on the Michigan Supreme Court website ([www.courts.mi.gov/scao/courtforms](http://www.courts.mi.gov/scao/courtforms)) in portable document format (PDF). The forms can be accessed and printed from the website by anyone who has Adobe's Acrobat Reader, which is available free of charge from Adobe.

When a form is revised or developed without publication for comment or discussion by the Michigan Court Forms Committee (i.e., as a result of an immediate change necessitated by a change in court rule or in light of a court opinion), paper copies are distributed and the form is posted as soon as it is approved. Numerical and alphabetical indexes are updated and posted to the website along with an explanation of the change to the form. Notice of the new or revised form is also sent to the State Bar of Michigan for publication in the Michigan Bar Journal as it deems appropriate.

When a form is revised and developed through the Michigan Court Forms Committee process, it is done in conjunction with other forms presented to the committee. The forms are distributed and posted as a group in June and December of each year. The mailing includes camera-ready copies of the forms, revised numerical and alphabetical indexes, an explanation of the changes to the forms, and, when necessary, instructions on

the use of the forms. These materials are posted to the website the same day they are mailed. Notice of the revised and new forms is sent to the State Bar of Michigan for publication in the Michigan Bar Journal.

### **3. Forms Contact Person**

Each court has one designated forms contact person who will be the primary contact for the forms analyst. The purpose of the forms contact person is to:

- a. be the telephone contact person to coordinate forms requests, questions, and other forms-related issues between the State Court Administrative Office and the court (this does not preclude anyone else from contacting SCAO directly); and
- b. receive from the State Court Administrative Office the original camera-ready copies of the approved forms, forms indexes, and other correspondence regarding forms.